

He has a long list of accomplishments and awards, including earning the Purple Heart and the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device for Valor. In addition, he was named as one of People Magazine's Heroes of the Year and a 2011 recipient of the Veterans Leadership Award presented by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. The next year, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta invited Aaron to discuss matters affecting wounded veterans.

He has taken his pain and suffering and turned it into a model of perseverance that is helping other soldiers and veterans heal from the pain of battle.

Aaron, we are proud of your visionary leadership and all of your accomplishments. You have always maintained an optimistic attitude and a determination that can be an example to us all. We are excited to see what your future holds, and we are proud to call you a son of Rogers, Arkansas. ●

#### REMEMBERING GORDON MANSFIELD

● Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, today I rise to honor the legacy of former VA Deputy Secretary Gordon Mansfield; a combat veteran, friend, and tireless advocate for our veterans. He passed away last week. Over the course of his distinguished career Gordon served his nation, its veterans, and those persevering through disabilities. He will be missed but his legacy remembered.

Like many in his generation, Gordon enlisted and served in Vietnam. During the Tet Offensive, while on his second combat tour, Gordon was wounded and sustained a spinal cord injury. He was awarded the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and Presidential Unit Citation. While recovering from his injuries, Gordon earned his law degree, and upon moving back to Florida, began practicing law. He served as a counsel in a legal aid program devoted to assisting his fellow veterans.

From 1981 to 1989, Gordon served as the executive director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, advocating for disabled veterans' interests on a national level. His work at PVA was instrumental in standing up the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as well as shaping landmark disabilities advocacy legislation. In 1989, Gordon joined the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and served as President George H.W. Bush's Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. There he served as a strong advocate for accessible housing.

In 2001, Gordon once again answered the call to help veterans, joining Secretary Anthony Principi as the Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs. In 2004, he became the Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, and served as Acting Secretary in 2007. During his time at the

VA, Gordon oversaw the implementation of the post-9/11 GI bill and many other major transformation initiatives.

I worked closely with Gordon to establish the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago, the Nation's first fully integrated Department of Defense-VA medical center. Only a few years before, a Washington consulting company recommended the closure of the North Chicago VA. Instead, the idea behind the Lovell FHCC was born.

Working with Gordon was a privilege, and through his dedication to this effort, we succeeded. Today, over 100,000 veterans, military servicemembers, and their families have access to state-of-the-art health care at the Lovell FHCC.

It is for this, and his many other accomplishments, that we thank and honor Gordon Mansfield for his service to this Nation. ●

#### RHODE ISLAND'S MARINE ECONOMY

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to one of my State's great traditions and to a wonderful man. The Herreshoff Marine Museum, founded in 1971, preserves today the history of one of our State's most important economic and design legacies, the Herreshoff boat building company of Bristol.

Early Rhode Island settlers took advantage of the State's location on the Narragansett Bay to foster one of Colonial America's most successful marine economies. Newport, RI, was the Colonies' fifth most prosperous commercial center, in part because of its port activity. Since that time, Rhode Islanders have sustained the State's maritime tradition, excelling in boatbuilding, fishing, shipping, port operation, energy exploration, and marine biology.

The marine trades continue to play a pivotal economic development role in our State today; as many other sectors in Rhode Island struggle to rebound from the recent recession, our marine industry is actually expanding. The Rhode Island Marine Trade Association reports that this industry supports over 6,600 Rhode Island jobs, paying almost \$260 million in wages to Rhode Island workers—and almost 10 percent of private employers in the State are associated with the boating industry.

The Herreshoff family helped shape Rhode Island's maritime legacy. In 1878, John Brown Herreshoff and his brother Nathanael Greene Herreshoff more commonly known as "Captain Nat"—joined forces to form the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company in Bristol, RI. Known for innovative design, superior skills, and efficient manufacturing, the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company quickly became a national leader in the boatbuilding industry. The brothers developed a lighter, faster version of the steam generator boiler, which allowed steamboats to op-

erate at a much higher speed than previously possible. Indeed, Herreshoff built the fastest boats on the water, both steam and sail. Between 1893 and 1920, five of Nathanael Greene Herreshoff's custom-designed racing sloops were chosen to sail in the prestigious America's Cup, and all five emerged as victors.

Notwithstanding these sea-going champions, the Herreshoffs' most acclaimed boat design is arguably the smaller S class. Nathanael Greene Herreshoff first designed the S boat in 1919, and the company built 95 boats before halting production in 1941. So well designed and built are they, that many S boats are still racing today.

It is no wonder the S boat has held up so well. The boat shows speed and agility under all conditions, and its engineering is considered one of the most groundbreaking undertakings in boatbuilding history. The S boat was particularly well suited for the coastal waters of Rhode Island: comfortable for easy day sailing; fast when racing hard. Its deep keel and hull shape made the boat steady in the strong ocean breeze that characterizes summer afternoons on Narragansett Bay, but on mild days its vast mainsail catches the lightest zephyr. The S boat boasted a keel with a high aspect ratio, and a high ballast-to-displacement ratio, allowing for a stiffer boat. Although these features were unusual for the 1900s, other boat designers quickly adopted them after the great success of the S boat became apparent. The S boat transom became a common sight for other sailors.

Ninety-five years after the first S boat splashed into Bristol Harbor at the Herreshoff boatyard, the fleet is active and growing, with boats being restored to join the class. This success and growth is much thanks to fleet commodore Fred Roy. Fred brought bouyant enthusiasm and cheerfulness to the Narragansett Bay Herreshoff S Class Association, and the association and all who love our bay and its special sailing traditions join in appreciation of Fred Roy. Fred has brought the spirit of the S boat, rail down and surging forward, to this part of our ongoing history and maritime culture, and I take this opportunity to thank and salute him, and celebrate this tradition of Narragansett Bay. ●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)